IN THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1. (currently amended) A method for operation of an automobile night vision system having two or more components, comprising

an illumination unit for the illumination of the area surrounding the vehicle,

an image recording unit for the recording of data from the surrounding area,

an image processing unit for the evaluation of data from the surrounding area,

~~characterized~~

~~in that~~ wherein the components of the night vision system are operated in different constellations on the basis of at least one control signal.

2. (currently amended) The method as claimed in claim 1,

~~characterized~~

~~in that~~ wherein an optical display is used as an additional component in order to display information from the surrounding area as well as further information from image data produced by the image processing unit.

3. (currently amended) The method as claimed in claim 1 ~~one of the preceding claims~~,

~~characterized~~

~~in that~~ wherein the night vision system interchanges information with vehicle-internal systems, and a suitable interface is used as an additional component for this purpose.

4. (currently amended) The method as claimed in claim 2 ~~one of claims 2 or 3~~, ~~characterized in that,~~ wherein in the situation where the control signal is represented by the image data supplied from the image processing unit,

and the optical display is switched off automatically, if the control signal has not changed

within a predetermined time interval, in order to avoid irritation.

5. (currently amended) The method as claimed in claim 2 ~~one of claims 2 to 4, characterized in that,~~ wherein in the situation where the control signal is generated on the basis of a request for the night vision functionality by the driver, the optical display is activated in any case, in order to avoid irritation.

6. (currently amended) The method as claimed in one of claim 2 ~~one of claims 2 to 5, characterized in that,~~ wherein in the situation where the control signal is generated on the basis of communication with other vehicles and/or traffic facilities, and communication is intended to take place using components of the night vision system, the optical display is not switched on, in order to avoid distracting the driver.

7. (currently amended) The method as claimed in claim 1 ~~one of the preceding claims, characterized~~
~~in that,~~ wherein in the situation where the control signal is generated by vehicle-internal systems, the night vision system is switched on, with the optical display remaining off, in order to avoid distracting the driver.

8. (currently amended) The method as claimed in claim 1 ~~one of the preceding claims, characterized~~
~~in that,~~ wherein in the situation where the control signal is generated on the basis of a request for the night vision functionality by the driver or by further vehicle-internal systems, as a result of which the night vision system is activated in any case, the illumination unit is switched on only as a function of further operating conditions, in order not to endanger others in the traffic.

9. (currently amended) The method as claimed in claim 1 ~~one of claims 1 to 7, characterized~~

~~in that,~~ wherein in the situation where the control signal is generated on the basis of a vehicle-internal system which is connected to a vehicle-external diagnosis system,
all of the components of the night vision system and the optical display can be activated independently of the operating conditions,
and information can be interchanged between these components and vehicle-internal systems.

10. (currently amended) An apparatus for operation of an automobile night vision system having two or more components, comprising
an illumination unit for illumination of the area surrounding the vehicle,
an image recording unit for recording of data from the surrounding area,
an image processing unit for evaluation of data from the surrounding area,
~~characterized~~
~~in that~~ wherein the components of the night vision system are operated in different constellations on the basis of at least one control signal.

11. (currently amended) The apparatus as claimed in claim 10,
~~characterized~~
~~in that~~ wherein the night vision system has an optical display as an additional component.

12. (currently amended) The apparatus as claimed in claim 10 ~~one of the preceding claims~~,
~~characterized~~
~~in that~~ wherein the night vision system has an interface to vehicle-internal systems as an additional component.